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S E C R E T ROME 002791

SIPDIS

THE HAGUE FOR CWC DEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2013

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SUBJECT: ITALY CONCERNED ABOUT ALBANIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS

REF: SECSTATE 163256

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL-MINISTER COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS
1.5 (B) AND (D)

¶11. (C) POLMIL OFFICER ON JUNE 18 CONVEYED REFTEL POINTS TO GIOVANNI IANNUZZI, DIRECTOR OF THE MFA'S OFFICE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS. NBC EXPERT GENERAL GIANFRANCO TRACCI ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE PURSUANT DISCUSSION.

¶12. (S) IANNUZZI WAS PLEASED THAT THE U.S. INTENT IS TO MOVE TO STRENGTHEN THE PHYSICAL SECURITY AT ALBANIA'S DECLARED CHEMICAL WEAPONS STORAGE SITE -- PARTICULARLY GIVEN ITS PROXIMITY TO ITALIAN TERRITORY. IANNUZZI SAID REFTEL POINTS GAVE HIM THE SENSE THAT ITALY AND THE USG WERE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT ON AN APPROACH. HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT READY TO RULE OUT AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT. "WE ARE NOT, IN PRINCIPLE, OPPOSED TO IT," IANNUZZI SAID, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE "THE PARAMETERS OF THE PROBLEM ARE NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR." HE ARGUED THAT IT WAS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE TO USE THE G-8 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP AS A MECHANISM FOR MANAGING THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH DESTRUCTION OF THE BLISTER AGENT, BUT MADE CLEAR HE WAS NOT PROMOTING IT AS A SOLUTION. IANNUZZI APPRECIATED USG OPENNESS TO ENGAGING IN FURTHER EXPERT-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS AT THE JUNE 24-27 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS IN THE HAGUE, WHICH HE MAY ATTEND.

¶13. (S) AS FOR ITALIAN ASSISTANCE, THE GOI APPROACHED ALBANIA A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO AND IS STILL WAITING FOR AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE. ITALY IS PERPLEXED AS IT HAS NOTED SOME RESISTANCE ON THE PART OF ALBANIA IN COMING COMPLETELY CLEAN ABOUT THE AGENT STORED AT THE SITE. IANNUZZI ADMITTED THAT THE GOI WAS RATHER EMBARRASSED BY THE GOA'S BEHAVIOR GIVEN ITALY'S ROLE IN NURTURING ALBANIA, AND THE FACT THAT ITALY HAS KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT THE ALBANIANS WERE IN POSSESSION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AGENTS. IN EARLY JUNE, ROME SENT INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR IN TIRANA TO SEEK ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION ON ALBANIA'S CWC DECLARATION. AMBASSADOR IANNUCCI SUBSEQUENTLY ENGAGED THE GOA, BUT IANNUZZI JUDGED THAT THE RESPONSE HE RECEIVED WAS NOT SATISFACTORILY CONCRETE.

¶14. (S) IANNUZZI EMPHASIZED THAT ITALY IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF ITS MILITARY PERSONNEL STATIONED IN THE VICINITY OF THE STORAGE SITE. HE FEARED THAT THERE COULD BE MORE AGENT THAN THAT ALREADY KNOWN TO EXIST. MANAGING THE MATTER CORRECTLY AND EFFICIENTLY IS MADE ALL THE MORE URGENT BY THE FACT THAT TIRANA DOES NOT EXERT FULL CONTROL OVER ALBANIAN TERRITORY. ITALY RECOGNIZES THAT SWITZERLAND HAS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WORKING IN ALBANIA ON CW DESTRUCTION, AND HAS DISCUSSED THE GENERAL NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM WITH THE SWISS IN THE HAGUE. IANNUZZI ACKNOWLEDGED, IF SOMEWHAT RELUCTANTLY, THAT BERN HAS THE STATUS OF A PRIVILEGED INTERLOCUTOR WITH TIRANA ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS. THE KEY FOR ITALY IS THE SAFETY OF ITS MILITARY FORCES AND DESTRUCTION OF THE AGENT UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION.

¶15. (S) GENERAL TRACCI CONCLUDED BY SPECULATING THAT CHINA MAY HAVE SOLD THE AGENT TO ALBANIA, ARGUING THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR STATE PARTIES TO THE CWC TO ADDRESS THIS HEAD ON IF EVIDENCE OF A BEIJING-TIRANA CONNECTION EMERGES. IANNUZZI, WHILE COMPLIMENTING TRACCI FOR HIS NBC EXPERTISE, DID NOT COMMENT DIRECTLY ON THE GENERAL'S POINT.
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